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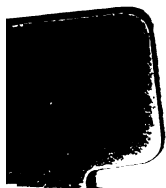
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ENGLAND

AMONG

THE NATIONS.

BY

JOHN LALOR, A.B.

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"SOLON SAID TO CRESUS (WHEN IN OSTENTATION HE SHOWED HIM HIS GOLD): SIR, IF ANY OTHER COME THAT HATH BETTER IRON THAN YOU, HE WILL BE THE MASTER OF ALL THIS GOLD."

*Bacon.*

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1864.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE following pages are reprinted from a work published in 1852. Such omissions and additions as recent events have rendered necessary have been made by a friend.

They have a special bearing on the present relation of England to the European Nations; and it is believed that the mature thoughts of an earnest mind will be found not unworthy the earnest attention of thoughtful men.

M. A. L.

HOLLY HILL, HAMPSTEAD,

*May* 10, 1864.





with him to the English ministers; but the important matter is, that the opinions which *were* held, and which in the great majority of cases were vehemently hostile to the French ruler, were not qualified or disguised, and, above all, were not disguised through *fear*. Even when the danger to the nation was greatest, the right and practice of free speech were not on that account in any danger. It will hardly be denied that our position at the beginning of the year 1852 had some points of painful contrast with the position occupied by that former generation, which has now for the most part gone to its rest. This is a subject to be approached with caution, and even with awe. Nothing of greater moment has occupied, or is likely to occupy, the thoughts of those who now live. To touch upon it is to tread at every step upon ashes, amidst which the embers are still hot and visible. It does indeed demand the gravest circumspection, but also frankness, and no shutting of the eyes to facts. To see and say the thing which ac-

tually is, is therefore the desire of the present writer, and in attempting thus much his obscurity is not inconsistent with a keen sense of responsibility.

The news of the great and sudden change which took place in France in December 1851, gave rise to impressions the most opposite amongst different minds in England. In some men, of the highest intelligence and worth, it produced if not rejoicing, at least satisfaction. To such it appeared that France was now at all events rescued from the horrors of anarchy; that under the guidance of her constitutional statesmen the vessel was fast going upon the rocks, and that in a concentration of the supreme command lay her last means of safety. It further appeared, that a single ruler, really wielding the great power of France, exempt from all the old Bourbon prejudices, disposed to make himself a representative of the civilization of Western Europe, and able to restrain and regulate without suppressing the democratic

English  
views of the  
*coup d'état*  
in France.

impulses of a people full of political vitality, would have formed, in friendly alliance with England, a far more effective counterpoise to the eastern despotisms of the Continent than could be presented by any distracted republic. Some such view may be supposed to have led to the error of Lord Palmerston, for it could have arisen from no motive inconsistent with an attachment to constitutional freedom.

But there were others in England who rejoiced at the blow given to constitutional liberty in France, not because it would array the force of that country against the old despotisms, but because it would assimilate the East and the West, and complete the iron framework of military rule over the whole of Europe. They were glad to think that the luxurious current of aristocratic existence would now flow on in its calm and perfumed tranquillity, without the intrusion of a sound or an odour which would recall the disquieting and offensive struggles of a suffering people. Above all, they were glad

to believe that democracy was in its coffin at last; that all that turbid popular life, which by the anxieties it created was every day more and more breaking up the smooth surface of Epicurean enjoyment, was at an end; that its remains were crushed down under ground, and would be heard of no more. They looked thenceforth for a peace where true peace could not be.

The view of the majority of the English people was different. When they saw the constitution of France, which with all its defects was still a constitution, and invested with the sacredness of legitimate authority, overturned by the man to whose sworn guardianship it had been entrusted, they blurted out at once the old strong phrase of "treason," "perjury," and the like, which they were always used to apply in such cases, without once thinking that it might be prudent to choose milder words, and still more prudent to hold their tongues altogether. This was from no sympathy with anarchy or love of socialism, for they would

have winked hard even at ultra-constitutional rigour, employed in curbing the more violent parties in France, because they hate disorder, and have a wholesome suspicion of every movement in which violent and worthless men are allowed to take a lead. But in the seizure of supreme power by Louis Napoleon they only saw a blow struck at the foundation of all law, of all good faith, and of all social security. Such was the sentence generally passed upon that proceeding, the thoughts of men all the while being fixed on France, and France alone—the position of England being that of a highly sympathetic, but still quite disinterested spectator.

Soon a new thought occurred, scarcely perceptible at first, so vague and unsubstantial did it seem ; but Idea of danger to England. creeping and spreading, at last it rose up, then, like the mist turning into a genie, in the eastern tale, suddenly became solid, and burst upon the eye in a form at once distinct, gigantic, and awful. That

thought was, that the position of England herself was totally changed by the event which had taken place in France. As the new light broke upon them, men wondered how a thing so plain should have been even for a moment doubtful. The power of France—a power more solid, compact, sustained, and far more fresh than in the days of Jena and Austerlitz—was now concentrated, and in what hands? In the hands of a man wholly indebted to the army for his elevation—a man likely to be tempted by the strongest motives to gratify the passions of that army, and to find for it the work which it would like best. But then, perhaps, of a man, who, from early training and personal inclination, was unlikely to launch that fiery mass of impatient valour against England? In the hands of a man who, if he did not suck in antipathy to England with his mother's milk, had at least been brought up, and had lived to maturity, in the passionate hope of restoring that power which the hand of England had struck

down—a man who, in prison and in exile, had fed his mind upon this thought—brooding over it in solitude—not losing hold of it in society—the mental eye often picturing visions of empire when the hand seemed busy with the cue or the dice-box,—and who, at one of the most solemn and critical occasions of his life, had avowed it to be his long-cherished purpose to wipe away the stain of Waterloo. Still, perhaps, of a man feeble in character, and incapable of dangerous designs? No; all was in the hands of a man whose strength of will, power of concealing enmity with smiles, patience in abiding his time, and decisive promptitude in execution when the time came, had just been shown to the amaze of Europe, in taking up out of his path, like children, the wisest statesmen and the most vigorous and experienced generals of France.

Such was the new power which in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, had raised its front of calm and silent menace in view of the shores of England. How was she



prepared, if called upon, to meet it? She felt instinctively for her weapons, and if she could have felt dismay then was the time. It would serve no purpose to go into an enumeration of the old guard-ships, the remote and inaccessible squadrons and regiments, the dismounted artillery trains, and the troops dispersed as police throughout the United Kingdom. It is enough to say, that according to the belief of many, not apt to give way to causeless fears, a French army might then have been landed on the south coast, and might have commemorated, by an inscription on Waterloo Bridge, its occupation of the capital of England.

The interval between the first faint suspicion of the altered position of this country, and the full perception of it, was not great, but it was enough to allow the interest and curiosity previously felt in the future of France to give way to an intense and absorbing anxiety respecting the future of England. The short, quick, telegraphic dispatches

Conduct of  
the English  
Journals.

were now scanned from hour to hour, with an eagerness full of painful meaning. A common view of the matter was occasionally expressed in this way—"He *must* go *some-where*, and what so likely as to come *here*?" The visions suggested to the imagination by the idea of "coming here" were sufficiently disagreeable—a violent disturbance of industry, of which credit is the mainspring and security the condition, being only one feature in a picture which included still darker traits, in the images of such personal licence as might be feared from troops hardened in the wars of Africa. Meanwhile, opinions continued to be pronounced upon the pregnant deed which had produced such a momentous change. Those who at first had rejoiced only to see democracy crushed, were sobered by the thought that England had now peril to apprehend with which no form of continental democracy had ever threatened her. They would gladly have protected her by strengthening the national defences, if that could be done in silence, but it could

not be done in silence, and they were tempted to think that it was better to deprecate than to brave the danger. Above all, nothing seemed so desirable as to refrain from irritating criticisms upon the new French government. But the feelings of the mass of the English people were different. They went on as before, calling things by their old names, seeing the danger indeed plainly enough, but condemning tyranny and bad faith as heartily as ever; and, above all, loudly execrating the reckless violence which had stained the streets of Paris with so much innocent blood. At the same time, the journals, as usual, were in the main true representatives of the popular sentiment, those accustomed to take the lead being clear and emphatic in their reprobation both of the *coup d'état* and of the wholesale and unscrupulous cruelties employed to sustain it. The conduct of one great journal in particular, which, whether for good or evil, is heard throughout Europe as the voice of the English people, then gave rise to a situation

which for solemn tragic interest has never been surpassed. The loud tumult of popular discussion in France had been suddenly succeeded by a mournful calm. In all other parts of the Continent the press was dumb. The danger to England seemed to become daily clearer, and as it did so the invectives of the *Times* against him who was most to be feared grew bolder and more unsparing. The freedom, or it may be the licence, of the tribunate was strained to the last pitch of daring, just then when every motive of mere selfish prudence would have counselled moderation. But it was impossible not to feel that, in that just and eloquent indignation which was then poured upon the head of the Usurper in the midst of the awful silence of Europe, and while the countless bayonets of France were pointing to these helpless shores, the old heroic soul of England did indeed speak out. In that flashed forth the fire of the same tameless race that faced the odds at Cressy, and that would still oppose a naked

breast, if nothing else, to the steel of an invader.

Yet there were men in England, men Alarm at the conduct of the 'Times.' of rank, and weight, and worth, who had not even a trembling sympathy with that effective vindication of the national honour. They saw in it nothing but imprudence—the very madness of imprudence. “It must provoke the vengeance of the great French ruler. Could it not be stopped, or in some way kept within bounds? A man with four hundred thousand soldiers at his back, all standing like greyhounds in the slips, will not remain patient under a series of such galling insults. To go on so was to invite invasion.” Perhaps this was a mistake. There are times when hardihood is the highest prudence. But, prudent or imprudent, the fulminations continued to peal through the thick dark atmosphere, and those who would have checked them, but were unable, could only indulge in gloomy prognostications of the issue. In the midst of the anxiety which

was then shown by many to consult the national safety by the surrender of the ancient privilege of free speech, a thought occurred to one observer, which to him at least was new, and was not consoling. It was a doubt as to whether the old theory, that all nations have their periods of youth, maturity, and decline, was not to have a further and greater illustration than any previous one, and whether the meridian glory of England did not already belong to the past. What did these fears, this prudence mean? Is the wealth, or the liberty, or the life of the individual to be purchased by the surrender of all that makes life noble? If not, can it be right for men as a nation to do that which each severally would reject as base? Besides, this prudential recommendation to truckle to a foreign power was something new in England. It was a change. Was it an advance? Such was the form which the doubt assumed, soon, however, to give way to the conclusion that this low-thoughted

prudence was *not* chargeable to the nation at large, and that those by whom it had been manifested had had their clearer perceptions blinded by the false—the utterly false—position in which a short-sighted economy had left the country in reference to its means of defence. The bravest men may be brought to a pause when they find that the superiority of force against them is overwhelming; and it must be acknowledged that the adoption of any measure calculated to provoke a war with France, at the commencement of the year 1852, did seem the extremity of rashness. Public men, as usual, put the best face on the matter, but it is idle now to conceal, and would be foolish to forget, what was then believed,—namely, that both humiliation and injury might have been inflicted upon England, if the means of annoyance existing on the other side of the channel had been fully employed against her.

Now, it is not right that men of influence

in England, whether statesmen or journalists, should be thus not so much tempted as compelled to consider, upon every great national exigency, whether it is safe to be honest; whether they may venture to speak their minds; whether first one and then another of the ancient English privileges must not be surrendered, until there will be left only the materials of animal enjoyment, to be held upon the tenure of a slavish silence. The means of protection ought to bear some proportion to the worth of those treasures, not only material but intellectual and moral, which are now borne in England, as in an ark, through the deluge that has spread ruin over Europe.

Let us look for a moment, on grounds of narrow calculation, at some of the risks which may be incurred.

Commerce  
and Missions.

British interests and British subjects are scattered literally over all parts of the globe. They go everywhere, and everywhere the flag of England, visibly or invisibly, floats over their heads. The old talisman of



Roman citizenship did not encircle its possessors with a more perfect panoply, than that with which the name of Englishman has been wont to invest those who could lay claim to it. I say this *has been* the case, because there appear more of those ominous signs, which have been frequent of late, that this charm is passing away. Upon what, however, has it depended? Plainly upon the belief, wide-spread even amongst barbarous tribes, that England, at the centre of her power and life, is sensitive to every rude touch which the most distant member of her social organization may encounter; that she will feel the wrong, however remote, where wrong is done, and not merely feel it, but that she CAN and WILL redress it. This alone renders possible and safe the immense extension and complexity of the foreign mercantile transactions of England, for all these are perpetually leading to collisions with strangers, in which passions are excited, and in which not only loss of property, but loss of life, would be a familiar occurrence, but for

the magical protecting shield which that distant Downing Street, in spite of all its defects, does, or did for a long time, contrive to throw over every British subject.

But does this power exist for commerce alone? What is to be said of the scarcely less wide-spread system of English Christian missions? It is true, indeed, according to my belief, that a Divine power watches over and will always preserve whatever is not of purely human origin in the Christian faith; but the safety and freedom, and much even of the efficiency of its teachers, are still left, like other privileges, dependent on human vigilance and effort. St Paul did not disdain to employ all the civic advantages which he could command, but, on the contrary, used them to the utmost to promote the great end for which he lived, having no scruple about the tacit sanction thereby given to that armed force of the Government by which alone his legal rights could be enforced. A spirit much like that which stood so stiffly upon the appeal to Cæsar,

and extorted an apology from the magistrates of Philippi, was to my own eye visibly at work, some years ago, in the passionate and somewhat martial ardour with which eminent Christian ministers, in spite of their pacific tendencies and sympathies, called for the obtainment of redress from France in the matter of Tahiti. Was that zeal ridiculous, or inconsistent with the Christian profession of those who felt it? Far from it. It was an honourable and Christian zeal; a zeal free from all taint of selfishness. That for which those excellent men were so deeply moved was an object worthy of enthusiasm.

There is no more remarkable phenomenon in history than the change wrought in the Society Islands by Christianity. A critic, who thinks it more profitable to dwell on what is bad than on what is good, may find fault enough in what has been done, but the moral triumph, as a whole, is one of those facts upon which criticism tries its teeth in vain.

French Protectorate of Tahiti.

It is little more than half a century since those islands were plunged in abject barbarism. Human sacrifices, child murder, and other abominations connected with a debasing system of idolatry, were the most prominent features in the habitual life of the people. In 1774 two Roman Catholic missionaries were sent amongst them from Peru, but that mission proved a failure, and was soon abandoned. At the close of the last century was formed the London Missionary Society, and one of its earliest efforts was that made for the conversion of Tahiti. They who learn languages more or less resembling their own, with the aid of grammars, dictionaries, and skilful teachers, can ill appreciate the task of him who, without grammar, dictionary, or teacher, and without a single analogy of sound or inflexion to guide him, tries to acquire fluency in a barbarous tongue. All this the missionaries to Tahiti, as in similar cases, had to do, and they did it—but for what? Only to obtain the command of an *instru-*

*ment*, which was to be afterwards used in the still harder task of softening and subduing to the yoke of the gospel the fierce passions of the human heart. The calm and inflexible heroism of the missionaries reached the point of being able to deliver the message; but years wore away in conflict with the obstinate sensualism of the people; and after some of those faithful men had sealed their testimony with their blood, the survivors, in the year 1809, were expelled, and the whole enterprise seemed to be completely at an end. But such enterprises do not end in that way. Two years afterwards the missionary labours were resumed, and then it was found that that moral desert which had been so long barren was yet to rejoice and blossom as the rose. The seed which appeared to have been cast only into stony places had not fallen in vain, and before long the fields were white with a harvest. Within less than a single generation from that time, it was possible to say that Tahiti possessed "a written language,

a free press, a representative government, courts of justice, written laws, useful and improved resources,"\* all connected with and flowing out of the general reception of Christianity. Upon all that scene of fair accomplishment, and still fairer promise, suddenly came down the so-called Protectorate of France, threatening, as it seemed, nothing less than the complete disorganization and ruin of a system which was still too young and feeble to go long alone, without the strong English hand to lean upon when needful. Was it wonderful that Christian ministers should be indignant? Was it wonderful that they should then think one of the most active and resolute of foreign ministers not active and resolute enough in using the power of England for the rescue and preservation of the pearl which they prized so highly?

This zeal, in my view, was zeal in a good thing; and, though less lofty, not less just is that common demand of the English

\* Report of the London Missionary Society, 1835.

trader, that his venture of silks and spices, Means of securing Justice between Nations. when they escape the billows and the rocks, shall be everywhere safe from any dishonesty which the authority of England can restrain. But merchants and ministers of religion must not be children. If they ask these things, they must know what they ask, and what such things cost; because such requests are idle without the existence of infantry, and dragoons, and ships of war, and parks of artillery. Moral force has been sarcastically defined as "physical force in perspective." This is not quite true, for there is a force—the force of ideas, of true convictions, which, in the long run, is an over-match for all the armies in the world. But the operation of this force is too slow for the desires of a Liverpool exporter, or of a warlike missionary at Exeter Hall. Pure moral force—that is to say, moral force without the possible accompaniment of grape-shot—is of no use at the Foreign Office. We have not come to that point yet, in the inter-

course of nations, though it is to be hoped we shall do so at some future time, according to the promise of the poet:—

“When the war-drum throbs no longer, and the battle  
flags are furled,  
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the  
world.”

For the present, and as the only means of ever reaching that glorious time, the nation, to whose safe keeping is entrusted the highest treasures of civilization, as a deposit on behalf of humanity, would be deeply guilty if, through ignorant or sordid negligence, she failed to keep in her hands the means of guarding them against unjust encroachments. The effective protection of commerce and of missions means this—that the scratch of a pen at Whitehall shall always be sufficient to move line-of-battle ships from their moorings, and launch them into the deep, manned, organized, and armed with all the machinery of destruction, as complete as skill and discipline and valour can make it. This is that sword of the



magistrate of which the Apostle speaks as a terror to evil-doers—a sword not indeed to be used without the most solemn responsibility, but still a sword of the sharpest edge, which he to whom it is entrusted ought not to bear in vain.

Possible  
demands  
upon  
England.

Constituted as men are, justice cannot be ensured amongst them without force. In the internal government of a nation, the force requisite for this purpose is entrusted to a few on behalf of the rest of society. But in the society of nations there is no supreme authority. Each separate nation is a portion of the general executive, and both the right and the duty of enforcing justice attach to and accompany the possession of power. Each, according to circumstances, may have to exercise the right, and upon each, according to the turn of events, this duty may be imposed. England, therefore, requires an adequate power to enforce her own just demands; but she wants such power no less to enable her to resist the unjust demands that may be

made upon her. Look at her position. Is there nothing in it to render her peculiarly liable to such demands? Throughout the whole of Continental Europe there is now hardly a free press. From the Ural Mountains to the Atlantic there is no influential country in which a journalist can freely criticise the reigning powers. This is not an accidental circumstance. It is a necessary result of that system of military repression which everywhere prevails. The two things could not exist together. But, then, if such Governments cannot bear the free criticism of journals at home, how long will they patiently endure the sharp comments of the English press? The nearest of those Powers is evidently very sensitive to its criticisms. What if a remonstrance should be addressed to England on the subject? It would not be the first time that such a thing has happened. A greater man than the present ruler of France was stung almost to madness by the attacks of the English journals, which continued even after the

peace of Amiens. But when Napoleon demanded, with anger, that such licence should be put down, the English Minister calmly replied that it could not be done, because to do so would be contrary to the custom of England. Why was he able to give that calm answer to the master of four hundred thousand bayonets? Only because the ships of the Nile were at hand, and the flag of Nelson ready to go to the mast-head.

If the custom should again be challenged,  
Right of  
Asylum. no doubt it will be again maintained. A right so necessary as that of free discussion will be maintained as long as any spark of the old life of England survives; but what is to be said of the *right of asylum*? Are there connected with the exercise of this right no possibilities of sudden and serious danger. This is a question of extreme delicacy; but it is one quite certain to be forced upon the public attention sooner or later, and had better be considered while it can be considered

calmly, and sifted to the bottom. There is no need to excite disturbing prejudices by referring to such cases as those of Mazzini or Kossuth. It will be admitted that those distinguished exiles are to be treated like others. There is to be one rule for all. None, for instance, can be suffered to break the law which prohibits warlike preparations against a Power with which we are at peace. So far the case is clear; but a case not quite so clear might easily arise in connection with some of the eminent persons now excluded from France. If any of them choose to reside in England, they will, of course, be as free to write, talk, and choose their company, as the French Ambassador. But events might occur in France to render the presence and movements of such individuals matters of great anxiety to the French Government. Is England prepared to maintain her old freedom of hospitality in spite of any demands which that anxiety might press upon her?

After the changes that have already taken

place in France, few can be desirous of seeing another French revolution; for, excepting the first memorable change, which produced some great reforms, each revolution in succession is a lottery, giving a certainty of nothing, except that the people always draw blanks. The thing most to be desired for France is, that she should become settled under some Government; but it can hardly be imagined that a people of such quick impulses, and so much mental activity, will continue to endure a system which represses all freedom of thought as rigidly as the Inquisition. Unless that system be relaxed, which seems an event not likely to take place, it will provoke reaction; and whenever the Government feels that there is any extensive movement amongst its foes, it will not look for precedents in Grotius or Vattel for the measures which it may take to counteract them. If England shall then be in a position to invite the process of putting on the screw, she will certainly be made to feel it. If the French Government shall at any

time become seriously apprehensive about the movements of French refugees in England, it will not rest content with the observance of the Foreign Enlistment Act. It might demand the expulsion of the person of some individual supposed to be dangerous, or it might ask for the inspection of his correspondence. What should be the answer? Unquestionably a flat negative is the only answer which the English people would permit to be returned to either demand. But, then, to give due weight to such a reply, troops, artillery, and channel fleet should all be in perfect order.

For the mere defence of England, therefore, it is essential that her armaments should be both large and <sup>Treaty</sup> efficient; but there are other objects, also, <sup>Obligations.</sup> which must be kept in view, unless it is to be held that nations are under no moral obligations whatever. There is nothing upon which opinions are more unsettled than upon the question as to the relations in which nations ought to stand to each

other. Theorists, as usual, take extreme and opposite views, between which the practice of mankind steers a middle course. Of the two extreme views, namely, that, on the one hand, which holds nations bound to render to each other the same services which private men are bound to render to their fellow-citizens; and that, on the other hand, which considers each nation free to do, at any moment, only what will promote its own immediate interest; the generous notion is, unfortunately, the more impracticable of the two. That a strong nation should step in with her aid whenever a weak one is struggling against oppression, is a course which recommends itself to our best feelings; but it may often be impossible to resist the injustice successfully, or without giving rise to an amount of disorder and misery so vast that the risk is too great to be voluntarily incurred by the limited human intelligence. No general rule of that kind, therefore, can be admitted. Each special case, as it arises, must be dealt with upon its own

merits; but the best security for a right decision in the cases where the national obligation is doubtful, will be sure to exist when a nation is habitually prepared to discharge those obligations towards other nations, of the extent and force of which there can be no doubt whatever.

Now, by the consent of all nations, there *are* cases in which interference is both right and practicable, and nations have bound themselves to each other by treaties in which such cases are provided for. It is, however, a question with some, whether such treaties ought to be observed. It is true they have been repeatedly broken. But are we advancing towards a better state of things, or declining towards a worse, by laying down the rule that no treaty stipulations are to be observed any more? The law of nations is a loose, defective, and, in some respects, wholly indeterminate rule of action; but, if it is ever to become clear, and adequate, and binding—if, in a word, we are ever to realize that grand conception, the “Federation



of the World," which is presented to us not only by the imagination of Tennyson, but by the practical sense of Cobden—it would seem natural to begin by giving all possible sacredness and validity to those parts of the law the obligation of which is universally admitted. There are some very refined moral questions which an individual may meditate respecting the use of property, but it would not help him, in the establishment of a perfect moral standard, to begin with a doubt as to his obligation to pay his tradesmen's bills. Now the tradesmen's bills of England are the treaties which she has deliberately signed, binding her to aid in maintaining the independence of certain foreign nations. She has contracted an obligation of this sort with respect to Belgium. It appears to me that England, in doing her part to bring about the universal federation of nations, ought to be ready to perform this particular duty of going to war, if it were necessary, to prevent a French occupation of Belgium. The attempt at

such occupation it is to be earnestly hoped will never be made; but a man must be blind who does not see that the possibility of such a thing must be contemplated by statesmen, and cannot be overlooked in the regulation of armaments.

Here, then, is a case in which, upon grounds distinct from those of mere self-defence, England should have the means of speaking and acting with authority and effect in her intercourse with foreign nations. She ought to be able to do this as a matter of duty, but, in truth, she would in doing so promote her own security. The conversion of Antwerp into a French port, to speak of nothing else, would greatly increase the means of annoyance existing immediately near the English coast. In resisting any attempt to annex Belgium to France, England, too, might count upon the firm support of Prussia, whose interest in the matter would be even stronger than her own. The strengthening

England  
connected  
with the  
Continent.

of that alliance, it may be added, was suggested and recommended by the whole state of European opinion, until by invasion of Denmark and gross breach of Treaty, Prussia herself broke the law of nations.

A brilliant writer of the present day has happily embodied in a fiction the important truth, that, however favourable circumstances may seem for making the experiment, no man can live long in refined and luxurious isolation. With all possible care and sacrifice to avoid social entanglements, he is quite certain to get entangled at last, and to find upon his shoulders the very responsibilities of which he had the greatest dread. It is exactly the same with nations. England cannot play the part of the "Bachelor of the Albany." From the great movement of society in Europe she cannot stand aloof. As a nation she has duties to perform, and woe to her if she neglect them. She ought to have, therefore, both a foreign policy and foreign alliances. She ought to have

a policy so distinct and well-sustained by public opinion, that the minister who represents her should both find the main line of his position marked out for him and feel, in maintaining it, that he has a nation at his back. No minister, however bold, energetic, or sagacious, can speak with effect in diplomatic intercourse if he does not know that in the last resort fleets and armies will be ready at his call. Towards weak nations, indeed, the policy of England should always be mercy and tolerance, even to the verge of laxity ; but, whenever the cause of justice requires it, she ought to be both able and resolute to impose her will upon the strong. If the national force cannot be thus wielded under a popular constitution, the result must be the growing ascendancy of despotic governments. Their power, perfectly organized and at command, will be more than a match for such disjointed and faint resistance as can be opposed to them by nations whose collective will is paralyzed by internal disunion.

England, then, should not only have a foreign policy well defined and well supported, but foreign alliances calculated to ensure that support, and should be willing not only to rejoice in the good, but to submit to the evil which may result from such alliances. Europe throughout its whole extent is now divided between two antagonist principles, that of absolutism, upheld solely by armies, and now generally triumphant, on the one hand, and that of anarchical democracy on the other, crushed for the moment, but still full of life, and even in its extravagances representing the eternal and irrepressible rebellion of the human mind against the dominion of brute force. The present ascendancy of military governments cannot be permanent. Sooner or later they will find the ground crack and yawn beneath their feet, as it has so often done before, and the old chaos will again threaten to engulf them ; but for the best interests of mankind there seems as little to hope from unqualified democracy as

from unqualified despotism. Some constitutional compromise and adjustment is indispensable to give any security for individual freedom and permanent tranquillity. It is to the strengthening of the constitutional principle in Europe that the foreign policy of England ought to be directed. The adverse forces have been so long softened and harmonised amongst ourselves, as to be scarcely distinguishable in the working of our mixed Government, but any such reconciliation in other countries must assume different forms, and be attended with far greater difficulties. All that can be done by England is, to strengthen constitutional forms abroad where they already exist, and to promote constitutional tendencies where they show themselves. Three countries, all very important from their position, but secondary in influence, may be said to enjoy constitutional freedom; namely, Belgium, Switzerland, and Piedmont, now enlarged into the Italian kingdom. The maintenance of those three States in their

integrity and independence is of the last importance to the future interests of Europe. If Great Britain stood alone, she ought not to suffer Belgium to fall without an effort to prevent it. But it may be fairly doubted whether her single strength would avail to protect either Switzerland or Rome from a despotic coalition.

There is, however, one of the great powers now hanging doubtfully between the two principles of despotism and constitutional liberty, but naturally marked out as the leading constitutional power of central Europe, and able, if it choose, both to stand firmly on a constitutional basis itself, and, in conjunction with England, to protect the freedom and independence of all the minor States. That power is Prussia. If the Government of France became more sympathetic with the constitutional principle, it would be its interest, and ought to be its inclination, to join heartily in such an alliance; and then that fair portion of Italy, which is blighted with the temporal rule of

the Papacy, might be allowed to free itself, and to assume a place amongst constitutional nations. The most solid basis of alliance between two countries lies in resemblances of character between their respective populations. In no other foreign country are the literature, institutions, and character of England appreciated as they are in Prussia. Nowhere else does an Englishman find himself so soon or so completely at home, and from no other country, nor, indeed, from all others put together, has so much rich, refreshing, and original thought been poured in the course of a single generation into the literature, and thereby into the intellectual and moral life, of England.

Now, whatever be the defects of the present government of Prussia, and whatever be the fears of her conservative classes, the spirit of her best statesmen is, and has long been, really constitutional. The ruling national idea, at least from the commencement



of the present century, has been the *people*, and not the *Crown*. There might be, and has been, great error in attempting too long to govern *for* the people, instead of *by* the people,—in the tendency by an overstrained bureaucratic system to keep them in leading strings; but still, in those primary and prolific reforms which relate to the tenure of land and public education, Prussia has, in a most marked manner, taken a lead in the civilization of Europe. Whatever headstrong folly may for a time be dominant upon the throne, and choose congenial ministers to thwart the wishes of the people, there is no country whatever in which have appeared statesmen so distinguished for moral elevation, largeness of view, and varied political accomplishments. Whether we judge from the public facts of history, or from such works as the letters of Humboldt and the life of Niebuhr, the impression is the same; and it is fully borne out by the testimony of enlightened and

dispassioned English observers like Mr Kay, whose account of Prussian education,\* and the administrative system connected with it, proves the existence of a habitual regard for the welfare of the most numerous class, which it is by no means so easy to trace in our own selfish party contests. With such elements of sympathy and union, a close and cordial understanding between the people of England and Prussia, of such a nature as to produce a perfect security, on the part of each ally, that the other might be counted upon when required, would be at the same time a guarantee for the peace of Europe, a removal of the temptation otherwise likely to be felt by Prussia to submit to Russian influence, and a great additional safeguard to England herself. To gain these advantages, some risks must be incurred, but they are risks necessarily connected with the duties of her position as one of the greatest of European nations.

\* "The Social Condition and Education of the People in England and Europe," by Joseph Kay, Esq., M.A.

Effect of  
disclaiming  
Foreign  
Relations.

If those duties are to be disclaimed, and if the tendency to maintain a position of complete isolation, which has been for some time so strongly felt, shall be completely carried out, then we ought not to shut our eyes to what the nature of the process will be. Prussia, left to herself, will have the most powerful reasons for falling back into those alliances which must confirm whatever retrograde tendency exists in her domestic policy. Meanwhile, the decline in the continental influence of England, which has been long in progress, will soon reach its final term. Men now living, and not yet old, can remember when the word of an English minister was a word of power wherever it was spoken, and when an injury or an insult to an English subject abroad would have brought punishment sharp and sure upon the wrong-doer; but that state of things has been gradually passing away under the influence of a conviction that England cares more for the extension of her

commerce than for all the claims of generosity, freedom, and honour. The opinion has got abroad, that she would not sacrifice a cargo of cotton or sugar to save the liberty of a community which has been free since the days of William Tell, and that her desire for peace at any price will not allow her to press for even the most just reparation wherever she is likely to encounter resistance. The conclusion to which such a state of things leads cannot be doubtful. A nation supposed to be thus wholly absorbed in the enjoyment of the comforts with which prosperity surrounds her, will first lose all the sympathies which, in spite of misunderstanding, are still felt for one who once fought single-handed in the cause of Europe against the greatest Power that the world has ever known. That old idea of England as the champion of liberty, long fading, will become remote and historical, to be recalled only by some poetic mind from the force of contrast.

"'Tis Greece, but living Greece no more."

They for whom she has ceased to care will in turn be profoundly indifferent to her fate, thinking only that it will point afresh the old moral of the great commercial histories of Tyre, and Carthage, and Venice. From the loss of respect to the infliction of humiliation, the transition is neither long nor difficult. The former has not yet quite gone, but the latter has begun; and why should not humiliation be endured? "This wealthy luxurious nation, which is only resolute on one point, that nothing short of downright attack shall compel her to strike a blow—why should one care for her reclamations, her protests, or her protocols? They mean nothing. There is no reason to dread her resentment, because she is too comfortable to resent anything. Of that old, fierce, yet noble indignation which was once so terrible, not a spark survives. She has grown fat and lethargic—eschews as a *bore*, and bad for digestion, all strong excitement, except of a commercial kind. Yes, she is harmless. She may be injured,

slighted, spat upon. She is no longer to be feared."

A mistake, certainly, according to my view of the matter. A mistake, under existing circumstances, not unlikely to be made, but still a very great mistake, and one which would cause those whom it might tempt too far to pay dearly for their presumption: for, at some point in that progressive process of insult, the apparent torpidity which invited it would suddenly disappear. The sensitive nerve would at last feel the sting. Then would it be seen that the might of England was not less than it ever was—that her righteous anger, when once aroused, could still strike awe—that at whatever sacrifice, with disorder perhaps to commerce, disturbance to society, and danger to liberty, which might all have been avoided, but still, at any cost, she could and would vindicate that great law of international justice of which she is an appointed and responsible administrator.

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As long as evil passions are powerful in the world, such a contingency as that of war cannot be considered impossible, and for a nation like England, the cheapest safeguard against the evils of such a contingency, and the best security for peace, are to be found in the maintenance of armaments, adequate in magnitude, and thoroughly efficient. To this subject it is now a matter of great urgency that the common sense of the nation should be applied. The superiority of England to other nations in industry depends greatly on the prevalence of that habit which has given rise to the maxim, that whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing as well as it can be done. If, as we are sometimes told, this old practice of giving the last finish to the work, so that it may *wear*, and not merely so that it may *sell*, shall ever disappear, the materials will be all ready for a second GIBBON to surpass the first by a darker and more mournful history. But the maxim has still force, that

National De-  
fences: Use  
of Tools.

whatever is to be done should be well done. Let us see how it applies to the present matter. To turn out any piece of work properly, as, for example, in manufactures, what is required? Two things—good workmen and good tools. These are exactly what are wanted for the effective defence of England; no more, but certainly no less. In these two, however, a great deal is implied.

To begin with tools. It is evident that the progress of civilization is continually rendering more complicated and expensive the instruments by which the labour of man is assisted. The numbers who hung, day by day, with an interest which seemed to grow by what it fed upon, over the specimens of machinery in the Great Exhibition, saw nothing in those magical creations but *tools*, intended to give the highest efficiency to human labour. But that which happens with the instruments of peace happens also with the instruments of war. Human invention is continually rendering them more



effective for their purpose. Nor is this to be regretted, for the more sweeping and infallible the means of destruction become, the greater will be the reluctance of mankind to resort to the use of them. But this continuous improvement makes it unsafe for one nation to remain behind another in the efficiency of its military tools. Even the Duke of Wellington could not win a battle with the bows and arrows which did such good work in the time of Henry the Fifth, and the muskets of the Peninsula are only fit for the stars and trophies of the Tower armoury, at a time when it may be necessary to face rifles which strike their mark five times as far, and with fifty times the certainty. But this is no point for the dogmatism or disquisition of non-professional men. According to Blackstone, it is a sound and ancient maxim of the English law, that each man is to be trusted in his own pursuit. This, then, is a case in which full power, with full responsibility, ought to be given to those who are professionally competent to

settle it. To such men the decision should be left, and one may hope that under this head some useful reforms are actually in progress.

In passing to the still more important and expensive tools which are required for naval purposes, we are in the sad predicament of finding the naval authorities divided amongst themselves. There must be something desperately wrong in this naval administration to yield results like those that have taken place. Externally it has an old, sleepy, superannuated look. It holds out upon the strength of what was done in its younger and more active days. Whatever was good in the old routine keeps going; but wherever provision has had to be made for new emergencies, the failures have been painfully conspicuous. Of the despatch of transports, and the state of the victualling department, it is not necessary to speak; but in the whole business of ship-building, the Admiralty has been, to say the least of it, signally

Naval  
Adminis-  
tration.

unlucky; and there are very strong appearances indeed, in favour of the opinion that the Government would get the work better done by private capitalists than it does in its own dockyards. This, however, is not a point to be decided without more information than the public possesses. But however it may be decided, it is certain that the Admiralty is now the most important department of the English Government. Internally the people govern themselves, with the help of the newspapers. If in the course of some long night the Home Office, with all its bustle, were to be carried away by the Thames, it would be a considerable time before the nation at large found any difference from its absence. Even the loss of the Foreign Office would not be without its consolations. And if the opinion of the colonies is to be regarded, consolation is by no means the word to express the feeling with which *they* would learn the total and irreparable destruction of the department which watches over their welfare. But

upon the Admiralty all hangs. Internal peace, security of domestic industry, the regular revolution of that complex machinery of credit whose least disturbance is always wide-spread suffering, the stability of the whole majestic system of English freedom, and the inestimable treasures, intellectual and moral, which have been amassed under its shade—all depend upon the vigilance, energy, and foresight of that department to which the guardianship of the English coast is entrusted.

Beyond all question that department does require reform—radical reform. How the reform should be applied is not so clear to the unprofessional mind, but the results to be aimed at are perfectly clear; and two things, at all events, will seem, to ordinary common sense, to be amongst the means necessary for attaining those results. In the first place, the whole business of preparing the *machinery* of war, such as ships, should be so far under distinct superintendence and management,

Admiralty  
Reform.

that those who are responsible for the management of fleets shall be unbiassed critics of the worth of the tools which are put into their hands. Without some arrangement of this sort there can be no effectual check upon bad workmanship in the dockyards. It is quite true, that means must exist for ensuring perfect unity and subordination in the whole series of labours which are intended to lead to one result; but it is no less true, that as long as the same men, who direct and are responsible for all active naval operations, have also to defend every blunder that may be made in naval architecture, such blunders will continually occur, and continually impair the efficiency of the service.

The critical function of the House of Commons is most valuable, but it should be rightly applied. Waste and extravagance in themselves are bad, and to be punished; economy is in itself good, and, as a matter of justice, to be enforced; but in this matter economy is not the object of chief importance

to any one. That which a Minister representing the Admiralty in the House of Commons ought to have, beyond all other things, to fear, is the detection of inefficiency in the department over which he presides. No criticism can be too searching, no attempt objectionable, to bring into the light the full details of an administration which creaks with rust in all its wheels, but the thing to be dreaded by every official, from the highest to the lowest, is, incompleteness in the work. An overcharge or excessive estimate ought here, if anywhere, to be venial; but the other delinquency is one grave enough to warrant the House of Commons in taking down and sharpening afresh that old weapon of impeachment which it has hardly used in earnest since the days of Strafford.

The previous remarks have had reference chiefly to the tools to be used in warfare. In this department England ought to be pre-eminent. From the manufacture of a matchlock to the

Men wanted  
who can use  
the Tools.

construction of a man-of-war, she is able to do whatever human skill can accomplish. With nothing less than this has she any reason to be content. Having the hand of the cunning workman, and all the materials upon which he is to operate, failure can only be due to mismanagement. But far more important than the instruments of warfare, is the temper, and training, and numbers of the men who are to wield them. "Walled towns," says Bacon, "stored arsenals and armories, goodly races of horse, chariots of war, elephants, ordnance; all this is but a sheep in a lion's skin, except the breed and disposition of the people be stout and warlike." Happily the breed and disposition of the English people *are* stout and warlike; but even this is not enough, for the bravest men on earth may be no more than food for gunpowder without *discipline*.

Discipline is a word of immense import. In this connection it means a training which enables men to act together. They can do

so only by habits of exact obedience to command. Upon this nearly the whole power of civilized man depends. Whether in war or in peace, it is all the same. Discipline is as necessary in industry as it is in fighting. But *habits* of any sort cannot be created in a moment. They must always be a work of time. You may have a number of intelligent men, familiar with figures and book-keeping, all ready, and yet find it hard to organize them into a bank. To create a new body like the Bank of England, without taking the materials wholesale from other banks, would be totally impossible. The machinery of that establishment has gone on revolving incessantly for more than a hundred and fifty years. Every new clerk who becomes a part of it is kept in his place and carried along, until he is used to the routine, by those who have been there before him. This is the quickest and surest mode of discipline, and yet this takes time. Imagine the business of the Bank of England handed over for a week to a body of volun-



teers! In every branch of industry, we find organization and discipline the conditions of success. How elaborate this organization is, may be seen in Mr Babbage's analysis of it in his "Economy of Machinery and Manufactures." How important it is, and how difficult it is to create it, may appear from what has often happened in the cotton districts. In times of slack demand, when the immense productive power of the factories, still going on, has glutted the warehouses with goods for which there are no purchasers, it would often be a great gain to the capitalist to stop the works, and at the same time to stop the profuse outflow of his capital in wages. Yet that expedient is not resorted to, except in the last extremity, and mainly for this reason—that when once the "hands" of a mill are fairly dispersed, it is exceedingly hard to re-establish the organization. In other words, the mill-owners think it bad economy to disband one of their regiments, because, though they may fairly expect to have veterans to enlist

from, when they want them, they know that, even with veterans, there will be delay, and blundering, and waste before the living mechanism can again get into order.

The judgment of those gentlemen in matters of business is so shrewd, or rather infallible, that nothing Military  
Discipline. better can be done than to use the lights of their experience in arranging the military and naval defences of England. It requires about four months to prepare a recruit for taking his place in the ranks of a regiment of foot—that is, amongst men already well trained, and whose habits of discipline form a sort of groove in which he has no choice but to move along. All this is necessary for common infantry, who require less preparation than any other kind of fighting men; and surely it is not surprising, when one thinks of what they have to do. Many worthy people take a long time to learn the movements of a single set of quadrilles, and are apt to vote any novelty in that line totally impracticable. The foot soldier has

to perform evolutions more difficult than those of a quadrille, exactly, and at a word, —not, however, on a chalked floor, nor even on a parade-ground, but on the field of battle, amidst the roar of artillery, when the smoky air whistles with bullets, possibly in the face of a charge of dragoons, and when the foot may catch every moment in the body of a dying comrade. Men who cannot do this are not properly soldiers, and when such are sent to contend with veterans in an open field, they are little better off than sheep in the hands of a butcher.

It is a matter of controversy whether militia-men, trained only for  
Efficacy of Militia. about a month in the year, can perform service of this sort. A militia is not the most effective kind of force, but its efficiency ought not to be undervalued. That the Duke of Wellington should ask for the militia was a sufficient proof of its utility, and, if his opinion had been unqualified, there would be no more to be said upon the subject; but his proposition for

reorganizing the militia was accompanied by this melancholy remark, "that if he asked for regular troops he knew he should not have them." What a reproach to the statesmanship and intelligence of England, that he, wiser surely than others upon this point, taking in—as only such a mind can take in—all the possibilities, should be compelled to contemplate dangers to which others are blind, and be denied the effectual means by which those dangers might be averted! The authority of the Duke of Wellington, therefore, does not stand in the way of considering whether, if the necessity arose, a militia would really be able to bear the brunt of the attack of an invading army; and upon this point reasoning and experience tend to show that they could only serve as a useful auxiliary force. It conflicts with all probability that peasants trained for a month in the year should be a match for veterans. The Spanish guerillas, though full of enthusiasm and natural courage, even with the aid of a mountainous country,

could never stop the march of regular troops. The armies of Switzerland are a kind of militia, but the men have rifles in their hands all the year round. This life-long discipline in the use of arms it was which enabled the fresh levies of Washington to face the English in the war of the Revolution; [and happily, since 1852, the want then pressing has been supplied in England by the establishment and constant training of our well-disciplined Rifle Volunteers.]

A more important question relates to the  
Manning of  
the Navy.      manning of the navy. This is the  
                                 heart of the whole matter. Is the  
manning of the navy such as to make an  
English minister feel at ease with respect to  
the safety of the country, in the event of  
great changes taking place on the Continent  
with the suddenness which we have lately  
seen to be possible? The question is not  
as to the efficiency of any crew now afloat.  
Assuming that every ship which is in actual  
service has her full complement of men, it  
may also be assumed that she is ready,

when called upon, to do her part in the old style. But the question is, are there a sufficient number of crews organized for the defence of the coast? For here it must be evident that there are no means of *suddenly* supplying a deficiency. The crew of a man-of-war, in order to be up to its work, wants a great deal more of preparation and discipline than a regiment of foot, or a body of cotton-spinners. For, in the first place, landsmen, however brave and strong, are of no use at all, but the contrary. Men who have neither legs nor stomachs nor hearts for the sea are a nuisance on board a ship. You are therefore restricted to one limited class, that is to say, to those persons who may be said to have lived upon the water from boyhood. And are such men to be had the moment they are wanted? Far from it. [Before 1852 they never had been obtainable on the sudden without impressment, and not always with it.

In the year 1853 the Admiralty was empowered to raise a body of Naval Coast

Volunteers, and in the year 1859 a Reserve Volunteer force of seamen was established by 22 & 23 Vict., c. 40. The Naval Coast Volunteers are liable to be called upon to serve in case of war or emergency, but may not be carried more than one hundred leagues from shore; they receive a £6 bounty, and are drilled in the district coastguard ships during twenty-eight days of each year, being for that time treated and paid as able seamen. As a reserve this force is of little value. The need urged by the writer in 1852 was a sore one, and it is a sore one still, in spite of very earnest efforts that have been made to substitute for impressment the best ascertainable system for the service of the navy among a free people. A Commission on the Manning of the Navy sat in 1852; and finding that volunteers, entered nominally for five years to particular ships, were paid off and dispersed at the end of a voyage, proposed a continuous service system, by which seamen should be offered advantages inducing them to serve

for ten years. The system was tried, and pronounced, in 1859, by a subsequent Commission to be sufficient to secure the maintenance of the peace establishment. It was then proposed to feed the continuous service force by passing all the two thousand boys who annually enter the service, instead of only five hundred of them, through the Government training-ships; and also to organize,—in addition to the Marines, the Coast Guard, and the Naval Coast Volunteers, upon whom draughts might be made,—a Reserve Force of four thousand seamen in the home ports, a thousand of them being seamen gunners, as provision against delay in completing crews of ships of war in case of any sudden emergency. At the same time evidence was taken of the unpopularity of the Queen's service among seamen, and recommendations were made, that have since partly been adopted, for increasing the healthiness and comfort of the hulks in which men are lodged while their ships are fitting out, for bettering the rations, re-



lieving the continuous-service men of the first cost of their kit, removal of some of the grievances of warrant officers, &c. But even this course of gradual improvement, attended by all the difficulties incidental to a change of system, has in many respects suffered seriously from a misplaced economy. While there is waste enough in high places, and millions are sunk in the sea on useless forts, with or without foundations in the sea bottom, the liberality that will alone enable the Queen's service to win from the merchant service and from foreign services the highest class of seamen is religiously avoided as extravagance. The Crimean war produced for us a naval force of 24,000 volunteer seamen on the continuous-service system. To save the small retaining fee that would have kept these men, trained men who had seen service, ready to the call of their country, 2,200 were paid off, with the understanding that if they entered again their previous service would not count towards pension! This was not

economy; it was extravagance—a costly destruction not only of available trained power, but also of good faith between the seaman population and the public service.]

The men, when secured, are still only the materials out of which *crews* are to be composed, for the crew of a man-of-war is a piece of human machinery, than which there is no one more complicated or more difficult to get into order. It is for naval men to say what training is sufficient; but many months at the least must be requisite to establish such a concert amongst several hundred men that they all shall act as one, not merely in a tempestuous sea, but under a raking fire, with masts crashing overhead, and splinters as dangerous as balls flying from the bulwarks at every shot. Imagine the time and trouble which it must have taken to get up the discipline of a ship, as was done in the *Dreadnought*, and probably in others during a former war, to such a point that three complete broadsides could be fired in the space

Nature of  
Military  
Discipline.

of three minutes and a half. The discipline of a man-of-war is not only hard to get up, but so hard to *keep* up, that a few months of an incapable commander are at any time enough to deprive a crew of one half of its efficiency. From all this it follows, that whatever number of men *may* be wanted upon an emergency *must* be provided and organized beforehand, for otherwise they will not be forthcoming.

There is no reason for keeping ships in  
A Naval Force  
for Emer-  
gencies. readiness except to meet emer-  
gencies, and it is a mistake to  
suppose that the emergency is provided  
for by an inadequate force, merely because  
that force seems excessive *while it is lying  
idle*. The shrewdness of commercial in-  
telligence is seldom at fault in cases of  
this kind. It knows how to compare the  
work to be done and the force that is to  
do it. Take, for example, the case of  
a London morning paper. There are few  
kinds of work so difficult, and probably not  
one more admirably done, than the re-

porting of the parliamentary debates. But an efficient reporting corps is organized not for ordinary but for extraordinary occasions. If any one were to observe, on some Tuesday or Thursday evening, fifteen or twenty gentlemen of high education and intelligence driving backwards and forwards between the House of Commons and a distant printing-office, to record the stale trivialities of some sleepy discussion, all the *pros* and *cons* of which could be given by any one of those gentlemen in an hour, without going to the House of Commons at all, such an observer would certainly think that there was an immense expenditure of power for a very small purpose. But if it happens very soon after that an occasion of great importance calls forth, from many leading statesmen, opinions which the whole empire is anxiously looking for, then all that powerful organization is called fully into play; and the speed, the completeness, and the finish with which the multitude of winged words are arrested and arranged, result, and can

only result, from the union of large numbers acting under a perfect and habitual discipline. The wonders of reporting—and the more the process is looked into the more wonderful it will appear—are only accomplished by establishments which do not shrink from an outlay so great as often to seem extravagant in proportion to the work done. But if ever a spirit of grudging economy is applied to a reporting corps, the result is invariably the same. The great occasion which is the true test of its efficiency has to be met by makeshifts and sudden substitutes, and never fails to be signalized by blundering and breaking down. It must be exactly the same with the Navy. It is useless to compute how many men and ships are wanted, merely for sailing matches, or for quiet cruising in the Channel. The proper number is that which will serve to defend the coast, whenever the coast requires to be defended. But then the cost? The cost is the cost of insurance. All the insurance offices live upon payments in exchange for which they

give nothing but the mere *feeling* of security. Whenever they have to pay upon a policy, it is to them so much loss, and the business could not go on at all if there were not hundreds willing to pay the premium for one who has to claim the compensation. It is now thought almost disgraceful in a private person to neglect insurance. What should such neglect be thought in a nation—in a nation having greater treasures to insure, and easier means of insuring them, than any other in the world?

The new element of steam makes the necessity for precaution much greater than before. It com-  
Steam  
Tactics.  
pletely supersedes a system of warfare in which England at all events had established a superiority, and must introduce another in which she will have to start as it were afresh, and on equal terms with her rivals. No one knows, or can know, to what changes in naval tactics this single cause may lead. The great naval battles, in which the tug shall be of Greek with Greek, are

all yet in the future; and the character of that future may be mainly determined by ideas now working in the brain of some smooth-faced lieutenant or some nimble topman, just as the military genius which astonished the old tacticians at Monte Notte belonged, twelve months previously, to a young artillery officer, who was sauntering about the streets of Paris in want of employment. Nor is it at all impossible for naval heroes to be born at both sides of the Channel. St Malo before now has had her Duguay Trouin, and Dunkirk her Jean Bart, who, as the enthusiastic French historian\* tells us, did, in their day, give matter for thought to the people of Plymouth.

One more remark must be added upon a point of considerable delicacy, Age of Naval Commanders. but which ought not to be withheld because statesmen, whatever they may think, do not speak of such things, and journals, like judges, only pronounce opinions

\* Michelet.

when some overt acts are brought in question before them. The Admirals of England are no doubt all possessed of the gallantry which belongs to the profession, and we know from eminent instances to how late a period the energy of command may survive; but it must still be considered a doubtful policy, to observe something like a rule of not entrusting the highest commands, except where the threescore years and ten commonly allotted to the life of man are nearly or altogether completed. It certainly was not by the observance of this rule that Wellington, Napoleon, or Nelson, was enabled to win great battles, but it *was* by the observance of this rule that England sustained that calamitous reverse, which has made the disasters of Cabul as memorable in English military history, as the loss of Varus and his legions was in that of Rome.

There yet remains one branch of the national defences upon which nothing has been said, and the efficiency of which still more evidently

The Artillery.



depends upon an elaborate apparatus and an elaborate education. Is the condition of the artillery what it should be? Whatever it be, it is certain that if it should fall to the lot of a commander to defend England, he will have to rely solely upon such men and equipments as he finds actually ready, for neither by the militia, nor by volunteering, nor by impressment, nor by any imaginable short cut, can you call into existence a considerable force of artillery. It is here, as it is in the different departments of industry; every step of progress implies the use of more complicated and expensive machinery, and the more machinery is used, the more there is need of skilled labour to direct it. The hard work is done by the machine, but the guidance and efficiency of it require the disciplined human intelligence. Now it is pre-eminently true, that military success has become more and more dependent upon that combination of machines and skilled labour which is found in the corps of artillery. The Duke

of Wellington's one remarkable failure in Spain—that before Burgos—was a failure for want of artillery; and there is probably no kind of force in which France, both from natural aptitude, and from the traditional system left by the Empire, is more brilliant and effective. Now of the inadequacy of this all-important artillery force in England very strong representations have been made, without, so far as I know, receiving any satisfactory reply.\*

[Has it been made more adequate, during the great revolution in construction of artillery that has been afoot since 1852, by the exclusiveness of Government patronage, which, having knighted Sir William Armstrong, appointed him Engineer to the War Department, consulting officer to the Crown upon the artillery of rival inventors, and Superintendent of the Gun Factory at Woolwich, while giving to his Elswick works

\* See, especially, an article in the *Quarterly Review* for March, 1848, evidently from a writer perfectly conversant with the subject.

so close a monopoly that the country was pledged to pay a sum not exceeding £85,000 as compensation if the withdrawal of Government orders deprived that establishment of all or a part of its profits. For shot and shell alone there was paid to the Elswick Company, between 1859 and 1862, nearly three hundred thousand pounds, when the same could have been made at Woolwich for about a hundred thousand less. Public opinion has recently compelled Sir William Armstrong's retirement from his public office, but we are still bound by an outlay of two and a-half millions sterling to a gun of which Mr Anderson, the confidential adviser of the Government upon artillery, advised the public last year, in a Committee of the House of Commons, "whatever the past may have been to throw it behind us, taking advantage of the experience now gained, and let bygones be bygones with respect to the manufacture of ordnance." Meanwhile, at far less cost, and by the free conversion of their old guns into new, the

French are everywhere furnished with the simple canon rayé, of which the power was felt by the Austrians at Solferino. The spirit of patronage and monopoly having stood in the way of a free forward movement, while the artillery of the whole civilized world has been in course of revolution, England has spent incomparably more and has got incomparably less for her money than any other of the first-rate Powers.]

Before leaving this subject, it is necessary to take notice of the impressions of a class of minds highly deserving of respect, to whom reasonings and calculations like those of the present chapter will seem not so much erroneous as revolting and abominable. They have a vague but very strong notion, that the whole business of war is demoralizing to those who engage in it; that every extension of the military and naval profession, therefore, ought to be resisted as an evil far outweighing any good that it can accomplish. Those, however, who have this feeling are rarely consistent,

Morality  
of Force.

for there is no argument against armies or navies which does not go to the renunciation of every exercise of physical force—an extreme to which none but the most extravagant theorists are found to venture. Few think it wrong to resist the midnight burglar, or would hesitate to use the surest means of protecting wife or child from outrage. It may often become the most sacred of duties to use force, to avert injustice from the weak and innocent; and if this be once accorded, the same principle must apply to all kinds of force, from the vigorous push of the unarmed fist, to the line-of-battle ship and the park of artillery. It is true, indeed, that the abuse of a military organization is a most fearful crime. He who holds such power holds it under an awful responsibility. It is thus at every step of human progress. The capacity of evil is enlarged at the same time with the capacity for good. But the God of armies *does* count armies amongst the instruments which may be used in his service, and in

which, therefore, duty may be as faithfully performed as at the plough or in the pulpit.

Those who insist on the immorality of a military class are horror-struck at irregularities to which they have no inclination themselves;

Soldiers and  
Traders on  
Moral Questions.

but a military moralist is sometimes able to turn the tables with considerable effect. The late Sir Charles Napier once took notice of some reflections cast upon his profession by certain mercantile civilians at a peace-meeting, in which the evils of the Caffre war were rather coolly set down to the military government of the Cape. The General begged to be informed by what class of persons the Caffres had been supplied with the muskets and ammunition which had been, and still continued to be, smuggled to them in violation of the law? It would hardly be said that it was the work of the military? It is unnecessary to criticise the reply. The blow, coming from one of a family who hit equally hard with the pen and the sword, was too heavy

and downright to be easily evaded. The arms with which the Caffres are able to slaughter English troops are regularly and illegally supplied to them by English traders. Yet the meanest soldier in her Majesty's service would not be guilty of this baseness. Nor can it be said that this kind of mercantile immorality is altogether a rare and exceptional thing. It must be remembered, that very nearly the greatest crime that has ever stained the history of a nation was a branch of commerce; and so deeply was the mercantile community interested in the slave trade, that Clarkson's abolitionism, on one occasion, nearly cost him his life amongst a mob of Liverpool merchants. What does this prove?—that the military class is better than the mercantile? By no means; but that the latter has its own peculiar and terrible temptations, which should restrain its uncharitable censures of the former.

The position of a military class, when considered upon any large view, contains in

it much that is favourable to a high morality. The subjection of individual impulses to an inflexible law is the Morality of Military Discipline. foundation of all greatness of character. But this subjection runs through the whole course of a military life. In no other class is there a more prompt and resolute answer to the call of duty. Personal comfort, personal safety, the dearest affections of family, everything gives way; and this takes place so habitually and universally, that a military or naval officer would feel degraded if he found in himself a moment's balancing or hesitation. Add to this the hardship of service and the frequent presence of danger, and the result is as complete a surrender of self as is exhibited by any other class of men whatever.\*

\* See, on the subject of military morality, "Lectures on Class Morality," by W. J. Fox, which are full of eloquence and thought. Mr Fox's leaning is strong *against* the military profession, but his mind is too just and comprehensive not to perceive many of the high moral qualities displayed by military men. Upon the moral effects of a restraining discipline generally, there is a chapter of great value in Mr Mill's "Logic of the Moral Sciences."



It is doubtful, indeed, whether the same amount of practical every-day heroism is to be found on so large a scale anywhere, except amongst members of the medical profession. They, like soldiers, are habitually exposing their lives; and they have the peculiar distinction of being always in active service.

General reasoning, however, upon the morality of fighting men is less impressive than exemplification by living instances. Those who doubt whether the highest and purest morality is possible where the hand is for ever on the sword, should study the life of Lord Collingwood.\* No heart was ever more full of soft affections, or more exquisitely fitted for the enjoyment of domestic happiness. He had a wife and daughters, to

\* "Memoirs and Correspondence of Lord Collingwood," by G. L. N. Collingwood, Esq. Of this publication Southey said most truly, that it was "a national good," and that "it ought to be in every officer's cabin and in every statesman's cabinet."

whom he was devotedly attached; but only a few short months out of many years were all that were allowed him for personal intercourse with those objects of his love. He lived upon the sea, constantly intent upon his work, and upon the welfare of all who aided him in doing it, from the captain of his flag-ship down to the meanest cabin-boy. He sought no personal honour or promotion. He did not know the feeling of jealousy. He rejoiced in the triumphs of Nelson as if they were his own. His life was governed by the idea of duty. It was spent and sacrificed in the defence of England. Nothing can be more touching than the image presented of him during his long monotonous watches of the French ports; often walking the quarterdeck night after night, while he sent his over-wearied lieutenant to take some rest—sometimes himself snatching a brief and hurried sleep upon a gun, then starting up and sweeping the horizon with his night-glass, lest the enemy should escape in the dark; then suffering the thoughts to

wander off for a moment to that distant Northumbrian home where the chair had been so long vacant, and where hope, sickened with disappointment and waiting, had almost become despair. And so the years wore on, and infirmities grew upon him, though he was not old. He begged the Admiralty to release him, but the request could not be granted—England could not spare him. He began to feel worn out. He was weak and tottering on his legs. The confinement to the ship was evidently killing him, and his friends urged him to surrender his command; but until the higher authorities relieved him he would not quit his post. He said that “his life was his country’s in whatever way it might be required of him.” She required it, and she had it. After much suffering he gradually sank, and died in the Mediterranean. And so ended that pure and beautiful life, the last thoughts being divided between family and country, and all constantly combined, as his biographer tells us, “with calmness

and perfect resignation to the will of God."

It may be said, perhaps, that Collingwood was an exception—one of the more educated and favoured class—and that such a case proves nothing as to the moral influence of naval or military discipline. Unquestionably he was one of Nature's favourites. The visits of the celestials are few and far between, and, like *Ænéas*, we rarely recognize them until the radiant feet have passed away from the earth; but we may turn to a class which is not supposed by any to be peculiarly favoured. It has been often mentioned as a wonder, and sometimes as a reproach, that the rank and file of the British army are composed of bad materials. The notion is, of course, an error, because good soldiers *cannot* be made out of bad materials; but it is true enough that recruits are constantly drawn from a class which is exposed to numerous and powerful temptations. But, whatever be the immorality of

that class, the discipline of the army does much to raise its members in the scale of humanity. A proof will occur to the recollection of every one, from the circumstances connected with the shipwreck of the *Birkenhead*. Who can forget that memorable scene, and, amidst all its touching details, that pre-eminent fact of the perfect order and obedience of the troops up to the very moment at which the ship went to pieces? That wild impulse to self-preservation which so often breaks through the strongest restraints was there completely subdued. The law of discipline was sacredly observed to the last; and when the duties which were commanded could no longer be performed, those brave and faithful men went down, in calmness and silence, to inevitable death.

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If the belief that the human race is moving onwards in a state of uniform moral progression, be in any degree difficult to reconcile with the facts of history, the same thing cannot be said of the belief that particular nations run through successive stages somewhat like those which we mark in the individual as youth, maturity, and decay. This latter opinion was expressed by Bacon in these pregnant words. "In the youth of a State arms do flourish:—in the middle age of a State learning, and then both of them together for a time; in the declining age of a State, mechanical arts and merchandize."

Looking to the changes which take place in individual character, it is to be feared that moral decay is more common than moral improvement. The courageous truth, the overflowing affection, the prompt self-sacrifice which so often make youth beautiful, are not so apt to be manifested in advanced years. On the contrary, the glorious promise of the dawn is often overcast before the sun is yet

midway in its course. The warm impulse gives way to the cold calculation, and the heart, which at the outset of life was a fountain of noble feeling, becomes closed and withered up, and "dry as summer dust," before it returns to the source from which it came. One of the aspects of this truth appears in the well-known lines of Wordsworth :—

"Heaven lies about us in our infancy ;  
Shades of the prison-house begin to close  
Upon the growing boy.  
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows :  
He sees it in his joy.  
The Youth who daily farther from the East  
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,  
And by the vision splendid  
Is on his way attended ;  
At length the Man perceives it die away  
And fade into the light of common day."

This gradual loss of the heavenly light does not indicate moral progress. But if particular men may become hard and selfish, and sink into every kind of moral degradation as they advance in life, such a thing cannot be impossible for societies of men,

that is to say, for nations. Accordingly this fact of national decay is not only possible, but one of the most familiar to be met with in history.

The career and fate of Greece are known to every reader. The unrivalled intellectual power and deep sensi-  
Greece and Rome.  
bility to beauty of the contemporaries of Pericles, did not save others who belonged to the same stock, and who still remained pre-eminent for mental accomplishments, from that moral decay which rendered them the scorn of the Romans. The adroit Greek adventurer, who could assume every shape for money, was in the times of the Empire the ideal of all that was mean and contemptible. Neither did the coarser but more vigorous fibre of the Roman national character hold out against corrupting influences. The descendants of the Scipios cared more for their fish-ponds than for their liberties in the time of Cæsar, and the depravity and worthlessness of the same aristocracy in the time of Tacitus was some-



thing which the modern imagination finds it difficult to conceive. The intensity of the evil is only fully brought out where the light of Christianity is thrown upon it, as is done in the epistles of St Paul.

The advance guard of modern European civilization consisted of the people of Northern Italy. The virgin soil of the fresh Lombard race was the first to receive the seeds of the Greek and Roman culture, immeasurably enriched as they were by combinations with Christianity, and it soon sent up a noble growth of organized valour, policy, literature, and commerce. But the early ripeness of the Italian republics was followed by early decay. The men of iron became men of silk, and the sword grew too heavy for their enervated hands; yet wealth continued to advance, and the commercial prosperity of Italy was at its height, when companies of "Free Lances," like that of the English Hawkwood, kept the degraded inhabitants of the towns in continual terror. Whatever just hopes may

be entertained of the regeneration of the Italian people at the present day, the fact of their once having fallen from a lofty height of moral and national power is too palpable to be denied.

Perhaps the most striking and even frightful case of national decay is presented by Spain, and especially by the Spanish aristocracy, amongst whom the noble spirit of Christian chivalry survived longer than in any other part of Europe. The moral stature of the most eminent Spaniards of the sixteenth century was gigantic. The greatest commanders, whether by land or by sea, were of that nation, and the contemporaries of Ximenes, Gonsalvo, and the first American discoverers, were men whose capacity of great thought and heroic endurance might well make even England tremble. What a contrast between those and their effete descendants, whose imbecility, both in council and at the head of armies, a Wellington found harder to contend with than the valour of his foes, in

Spain and  
Turkey.

those great achievements which delivered the Peninsula!

The Ottoman Empire never reached so high a pitch of moral attainment as Christian Spain, but its history affords a no less startling illustration of the rapidity with which the process of moral decomposition may sometimes proceed. In the fifteenth century, the enthusiasm and perfect discipline of the Turks rendered them so formidable—not to one country alone, but to the whole of Western Europe—as to impel many of the leading minds of Christendom to the project of a new crusade. At the commencement of the Lutheran Reformation the same people still held the undisputed naval ascendancy of the Mediterranean. Within about fifty years that ascendancy was totally and for ever destroyed at the Battle of Lepanto, and before the close of the sixteenth century, the Turkish Government had shrunk, from habits of self-indulgence and loss of discipline in those by whom its power was sustained, to that moral decrepitude which

has gradually rendered its hold of one of the fairest portions of Europe dependent upon the policy or the forbearance of other nations.

National decay in all these cases is properly a corruption, and differs as much from mere barbarism as Nature of Moral Decay. old age does from childhood. In a rude primitive people, there is observable a certain balance or harmony between their intellectual and moral powers. Their passions are coarse, but their intellectual perceptions are dull, and the outbreaks of appetite and anger alternate with flashes of generosity and compassion, which show the higher nature struggling to break the bonds which degrade it. But in the corruption of a civilized nation, there is presented the fearful spectacle of the ascendancy of the lower passions, with intellect and imagination employed in their service. They have looked upon the heavenly light, and have voluntarily turned back into darkness.

The disturbance of that rude harmony of

the faculties which Nature gives to her least favoured children, and which often survives in a peasantry after a ruling class has become corrupt, is the result of new stimulants, arising from the possession of new means of gratification, being addressed to the senses. In this way the barbarous races in contact with civilized man are almost invariably corrupted, and whatever their previous barbarism might have been, the change is a real demoralization. National corruption, then, may be said to consist of two things—a disproportionate development of all the impulses leading to personal gratification, and a loosening or destruction of numerous traditional restraints, by which indulgence was more or less controlled, and individual wills held habitually in subjection. It is evident that such corruption may be for a long time accompanied by a high artistic, intellectual, and commercial development. The Roman virtue was gone when the greatest of Roman intellects destroyed the last trace of liberty, and both literature and

luxurious indulgence were at their height in the age of Augustus. It is quite true that moral decay is certain to be ultimately followed by that of the intellectual faculties, but the latter may long survive the corruption of the nobler powers, and, strictly speaking, it is only by the subservience of intellect and imagination that corruption reaches its highest intensity.

It may be well to examine, though it must be in a very brief and imperfect manner, whether any of these appearances of decay are at present observable in the chief civilized nations of the world. With this view I shall make a few remarks upon appearances which may be noted in France, the United States, and England. Are there any signs in those countries of a tendency towards that state of things in which the ascendancy of the more ignoble impulses destroys all that is best in the life of a nation?

It requires very little knowledge of the French people to see that the appetite for

sensual enjoyments of all kinds has been whetted to a most dangerous sharpness within the last half century. The upper class is probably superior in moral character to the same class in the days of Louis XV.; but the great bulk of the nation has had its desires aroused by influences from which the misery and oppression of former days was a kind of protection. New wealth has been actually attained by a portion of the middle class, but the passion for new wealth has been universally excited. The popular reading shows the popular taste. What is to be inferred from the universal and greedy perusal of such works as the "Count of Monte Christo" and the "Wandering Jew" but this, that the images on which the mass of minds love to dwell are those of immense wealth, and the varied powers of luxurious enjoyment which it affords? Here, then, is evidence of a great development of the impulses to personal gratification in classes whose position must shut them out from it.

Where are the corresponding moral restraints? Upon this point it would be rash to dogmatize, because the moral restraints operating upon the life of a people often escape the eye of a foreign observer; but the evidence is too clear to leave a doubt in the mind of anybody, that the restraining principles of French society have been weakened or destroyed to an extent almost unexampled. In the army, indeed, but in the army alone, there is a stern and perfect discipline sustained by sentiments of the most powerful kind. Whatever may be the case in other respects, the military virtues of the French show no decay. The old valour is still there, and the subordination which gives it effect is only too complete. The work of M. de Vigny, "*De la Servitude Militaire*," describes the settled principle of self-abnegation, refined and beautiful even in its excess, which makes the French officer an instrument in the hands of his superior, and which, by the invariable laws of moral relation, confers social ascendancy on the



body amongst whom it prevails. Let us study the spirit of the French army in the pages of De Vigny, and that of the French bourgeoisie, with reasonable allowance for caricature, in the *Jérôme Paturot* of M. Reybaud, and we shall be at no loss to understand why France must, for a long time to come, obey a Military Government.

It is true, indeed, that in any comprehensive survey of the indications of moral character in France, much is met with which commands not only respect but admiration. The readiness with which the people are moved by appeals made to the more generous feelings, and the lofty self-denial and chivalrous delicacy of sentiment frequently displayed by common workmen, are signally characteristic of France. The revolutionary history, too, is as rich as that of any heroic age in examples of patriotic self-devotion; and even more honourable than those bursts of disinterested enthusiasm is the calm and inflexible adherence to principle shown by particular classes—by both republican

artizans and royalist nobles, in their fidelity to their respective political standards. But, notwithstanding these favourable indications, the general fact, that the mass of society in France has undergone, and is undergoing, a moral change which is *not* improvement, is apparent throughout the whole of its moral and political controversies, and nowhere more clearly than in the pages of M. Comte himself. The great fact which is continually present to the mind of M. Comte is that of *moral decomposition*—progressive moral and intellectual anarchy—or a constant approach to that state of universal personal isolation in which all the ties between man and man are broken, and in which every restraint imposed by tradition and early education has been uprooted. This presence and influence of an atmosphere of social decay are felt throughout the *Philosophie Positive*, as in the *Annals of Tacitus*; and it must be added, that the stoical elevation of the writer, despite of some querulous outbreaks, is quite as conspicuous as that of the great

Roman historian.\* M. Comte's view is, that a condition of progressive moral decomposition is characteristic of all Europe, and that all convictions and institutions will

\* The extraordinary position of Tacitus, however, is seldom appreciated. It has been depicted by Mr M'Cullagh Torrens, with great force, in his "Lectures on History," in the following passage :

"In this respect, I am inclined to look upon this work of Tacitus as one of the most stupendous efforts of truly moral greatness that we know of. I allude especially to the triumph of self-sustaining energy it manifests. In most other biographies of nations there are magnificent materials to work upon ; Tacitus had worse than none. In all of them there is likewise the great ingredient of antagonistic powers in action to be depicted ; but resistance was dead in his time. Herodotus is the chronicle of Grecian chivalry—the narrative of the most brilliant struggle that the world has seen, of moral discipline and daring with gigantic brutal force. Thucydides is an antithesis from end to end. Livy tells how the blood-hound cub was born, and how it grew, amid every sort of danger, from its suckling time in the wolf's den, till its matured ferocity, when every leaf in the forests of Asia and of Gaul had learned to tremble at its imperial howl. Polybius, too, had the same canvas to tint, though his colouring is more uniform.

"But Tacitus had a civilized desert for his landscape—a moral grave-yard for his scene. The conflict of political

have to be recast upon the basis of the Positive Philosophy. We may accept his testimony as to the existence of the disease within the range of his immediate observation, but by no means his remedy. What

principles and powers was over and past. The cataract had worn itself down. No man dreamed any more of a democracy ; no man imagined the restoration of an aristocratic commonwealth was possible. The provinces had ceased to revolt ; Numidia was become a domestic corn-field ; and the Greeks had learned to dance gracefully in their chains. As far as the circumspective eye could reach, there was nothing to be seen, but the rotting superincumbent weight of Rome. In the Babel chatter of the thronging of the forum, or in the dim silence of the night watch, no man any longer whispered—change. Had it been otherwise—had the sodden sense of helpless unresistance to imperial despotism been less thoroughly felt as universal and inevitable—Tacitus dared not have publicly let fall those scalding tears, which form the current of his history.

“ But think what it was to have the heart to write at all, at such a time ! Think what it was for one, whose soul was untainted by his time, to write of it ! Think what the strength of that spirit must have been to produce a work like his, and that despite the oppressive consciousness that he should never live to see the day when it could be appreciated, possibly without any distinct hope that it should ever be so ! ”

Plato could not do for Greece, M. Comte will not do for France. If an influx of new moral life is ever to reorganise and bind together her severed classes, and to restore her social health, it must be sought for elsewhere than in philosophy.

The North American Republic, though divided from us by the Atlantic,  
United States. offers, in the peculiarities of her social condition, even more that is instructive and interesting to us than France. An Anglo-Saxon people, living under Anglo-Saxon institutions, may enable us to seize and understand better the tendencies of principles which are working amongst ourselves. In this study we have the aid of one of the most accomplished observers that have ever surveyed the social life of nations. The "Democracy in America" of M. de Tocqueville is a work of classical authority even in England. With all the best qualities of French thought and French style, it indicates a sympathy with English ideas, and an understanding of English peculiarities,

such as was never before shown by a Frenchman. Now the general conclusion of M. de Tocqueville's work is, that the uncontrolled working of the democratic and commercial principles in the United States is not favourable to the moral progress of the people. Starting on a higher level of moral and political attainment than any other new community, they have made prodigious advances in wealth and power; but if any change has taken place in their moral condition, it is not improvement but deterioration. The character of the public men has declined from what it was in the revolutionary period. Legislation has fallen into the hands of an inferior class. Demagogue adventurers have everywhere acquired an immense increase of power, and the best minds not only shrink from political life, but from all open expression of opinion where it conflicts with that of the majority. This relinquishment of independent thought and utterance, considering the naturally stubborn independence of the Anglo-Saxon

character, is a fatal sign of moral decay. It is particularly striking in reference to the subject of negro slavery, respecting which the moral sentiments of a large portion of the American community have undergone so much depravation, that if the slave-trade were yet to be abolished, it is doubtful whether the measure would obtain the sanction of the legislature. It is true that a strong reaction has appeared in the abolition movement, and this shows the still powerful vitality of the moral sense in the national mind of America; but the intense and—I must say it—the unchristian violence of the Abolitionists, containing amongst them, as they do, men of the most heroic stamp, is itself the clearest evidence of the malignity of that moral evil which calls it forth. So influential over the whole field of morals, politics and even religion in America, is that influence which may be called the Slave-power, that many of the leading Abolitionists, in spite of the patriotism which runs in the blood of every American, go the

desperate and ruinous length of demanding a dissolution of the union. With respect to commercial morals, the tone is certainly lower than in England. Mr Dickens's portrait of the "smart" man is not to be forgotten. The brilliancy of Mr Dickens's colouring may sometimes go beyond the sobriety of Nature; but his honesty is undoubted, and his insight into character such that, upon a point like this, his single testimony must outweigh thousands of disclaimers. Other travellers have described the prevalence of bankruptcy to be so great as to cause it to be considered not in good taste to allude to the subject in general society. The pilgrim fathers, and that noble old colonial society which lives again in the pages of Mr Bancroft, would hardly have understood this new variety of moral sentiment. As for the pursuit of gain, it is admitted that the passion rages with growing violence from year to year; and now, the Californian discoveries, by opening new



visions of sudden wealth, have given it a fresh and fearful intensity. Looking at the American community as a whole, then, the signs of moral progress appear much less prominent than those of moral deterioration. [So thoughtful men spoke of America in 1852, with how much truth the Civil War has testified.]

Coming back to England after this survey of foreign countries, it is impossible not to begin with the suspicion, that from the evil influences which have been at work elsewhere she cannot have escaped. She certainly has not. Decay has attacked, and is weakening, some of the foundations of her moral strength; but the more the position and character of England are studied, the more the conviction will grow, that an unparalleled conjunction of happy influences has as yet preserved her from any fatal taint. The moral condition of society in England, however, is a subject infinitely too large for treatment here; but two

Evil Signs in  
England.

characteristics may be noted, as showing the working of exactly the same tendencies which appear in North America.

First, increased eagerness in the pursuit of wealth, accompanied by relaxation in the tone of commercial morality. Secondly, a decline of moral courage and frankness, as appearing in public life.

Upon the increased eagerness in the pursuit of wealth, I will here only observe, that the prominence of a portion of the aristocracy during the last speculative fever was greater and more conspicuous and discreditable than on any previous occasion. One **striking** moral effect of intense **competition** may also be noted, as set forth in an article on Civilization, which appeared in the *London and Westminster Review* for April, 1836, and which was attributed to Mr Mill.

“There has been much complaint of late years of the growth, both in the world of trade and in that of intellect, of quackery, and especially of puffing; but nobody seems to have remarked, that these are the inevit-

able outgrowth of immense competition—of a state of society where any voice, not pitched in an exaggerated key, is lost in the hubbub. Success, in so crowded a field, depends not upon what a person is, but upon what he seems: mere marketable qualities become the object instead of substantial ones, and a man's labour and capital are expended less in *doing* anything than in persuading other people that he has done it. Our own age has seen this evil brought to its consummation. Quackery there always was, but it once was a test of the absence of sterling qualities; there was a proverb that good wine needed no bush. It is our own age which has seen the honest dealer driven to quackery, by hard necessity, and the certainty of being undersold by the dishonest. For the first time, arts for attracting public attention form a necessary part of the qualifications even of the deserving; and skill in these goes farther than any other quality towards ensuring success. The same intensity of competition drives the

trading public more and more to play high for success, to throw for all or nothing ; and this, together with the difficulty of sure calculations in a field of commerce so widely extended, renders bankruptcy no longer disgraceful, because no longer a presumption either of dishonesty or imprudence : the discredit which it still incurs belongs to it, alas ! mainly as an indication of poverty."

The evils here adverted to are real and obvious. The statement respecting bankruptcy, however, must be taken as one of those rhetorical exaggerations, into which an earnest writer may often fall from his desire to enforce some important conclusion. By the majority of mercantile men in England, bankruptcy is still looked upon as disgraceful ; and if this were not the case, there would be little use in moralizing on the subject. It is true, however, that the failures of 1847 did lead to revelations which, as a whole, were felt to be more discreditable to the mercantile character of England than anything that had previously

occurred. For the first time, probably, since that early period when Flemish or Italian capital was first advanced upon English good faith, the credit of English merchants generally came under suspicion in foreign countries. Nearly at the same period occurred the scandalous abuses in the management of various railway boards, decidedly worse than anything of the kind that had been known before, and evincing too plainly a growing relaxation in the moral practice of mercantile men. If those events could be taken as fair indications of the morality either of the nation or of the mercantile classes as a whole, the case would be, indeed, past all surgery. But they cannot be regarded in that light, when we call to mind the clear and emphatic reprobation which those transactions received from mercantile men, from statesmen, and from the public press. Whatever progress the disease had made, that general and indignant condemnation was a proof that there was still moral vitality enough to effect

its cure, and that the community was sound at heart.

The decay of moral courage amongst public men appears to me to be in many respects a more serious evil, because the tendencies which lead to it seem less capable of counteraction. It has unquestionably increased since the Reform Bill, and threatens to be progressive under the continued working of popular representation. Exactly the same phenomena which De Tocqueville and others have noticed as resulting from the working of democracy in America, are becoming from day to day more prominent in England. Public opinion is growing tyrannical, and those who in any way depend upon its favour have strong temptations to become subservient and parasitical.

It is clearly the interest of a popular constituency, when it has once really secured a good man, to keep him, and adhere to him through good report and evil report. They may, in the first

Decline of  
Moral Courage.

Permanent  
Seats for Tried  
Men.

instance, scrutinize to the utmost into character and capacity; but, those points once ascertained, it is preposterous that one who is qualified to legislate should be expected to veer about with every breath of popular feeling. At all events, it is certain that the best men will *not* do so; and if constituencies are determined to establish this slavish relation with their members, they must expect to find in the latter the vices of a slavish spirit. The principle of giving men, once approved of, something like a permanent seat, is a conservative principle, which would now be of immense value, because it is perfectly in harmony with the most advanced ideas of the present age. Lord Mahon has shown, in a very striking manner, how family seats contributed to give steadiness to the working of the old English constitution; the list of the House of Commons in the reign of Queen Anne exhibiting many of the same names, in connection with the same seats, which appeared in that assembly more than a hundred years

later. That old principle, however, could not and cannot do otherwise than become progressively weaker in an age of widely-diffused political intelligence. But an effective substitute for it may be found, if popular constituencies have enough of wisdom and self-control to give permanence to the position of individuals of tried character and ability.

Most persons, when not under the influence of election excitement, would admit that there are many public men who, under all changes of government, ought to be in the House of Commons; men of the most opposite parties who have shown themselves among the most competent that England possesses to deal with public affairs. That being the case, what is wanted for the country is their own best and freest thoughts, unbiassed by pressure from without, because they must see, immeasurably better than the majority of their constituents, the bearings of the various questions which come before them. Of course, if a representative



absolutely changes his opinion upon a fundamental question, he should do as Sir Robert Peel did in 1829—restore the representative trust to those who placed it in his hands; but excepting such extreme cases, which are now likely to be rarer than ever, resistance on the ground of any question now in agitation, to men like Mr Disraeli, or Mr Cobden, would be, according to my view, exactly that vicious and dangerous working of the democratic principle which tends to destroy all independence and high character in public men.

According to these principles, the original position of Mr Macaulay at Edinburgh was one that ought never to have been disturbed; and it might have been thought that no member of parliament was more certain to have a life tenure of his seat. With the highest qualifications for public life, his political opinions were exactly of that firm and progressive yet moderate character, which might have been supposed to reflect

Mr Macaulay  
at Edinburgh.

whatever was best in the intelligence of the Scottish metropolis. He, however, was rejected on some contemptible grounds, in favour of a man previously unknown. If there were any so-called Conservatives who joined in the rejection, the proceeding on their parts was suicidal. The loss, as it happened, was a loss only to Edinburgh. The gain, was a gain to Mr Macaulay and to the whole world. Yet the brilliant proof was not requisite to satisfy any reflective person, that the miserable and exhausting drudgery of attendance at the House of Commons could not have been undertaken, by a man of such genius and such tastes, from any other motive than a sense of public duty.

But the spirit shown by the people of Edinburgh in the case of Mr Macaulay, was the same spirit which in more or less intensity is everywhere to be found, and which in many other cases encounters less resistance. This is the worst political symptom of the present time, that is to say, not so

much the *civium ardor prava jubentium* itself, as the want of that courageous and uncompromising resistance to it which is its natural and wholesome corrective. I am unwilling to cast personal reflections, but I must say, that the courage which leads men to brave unpopularity for a great national interest does appear to me to have declined within the last fifty years. Excepting the conduct of Sir Robert Peel upon the two great questions of Roman Catholic Emancipation and the repeal of the Corn Laws, there has been little to remind us of that spirit which was shown at the commencement of the French war by Charles James Fox, and in a much higher degree by the late Earl Grey. The amount of public and private obloquy, in the face of which those statesmen persevered in maintaining their own views, would have been too much for the feebler virtue of the present day.

Against these evils there are many grounds of hope, not only in the religious condition of the nation, but in the widely different

habits of practical humanity, the existence of which cannot be denied ; but these topics are too large to be <sup>Grounds of Hope.</sup> discussed within the limits of the present work. Two favourable circumstances, however, may be mentioned, as affording some counteraction to the evils that have been dwelt upon. The first is, the *great variety of masses into which society in England is divided*, and which give rise to such diversities of interest and opinion as it may be hoped will effectually prevent the tyrannical predominance of any one principle. Of this social peculiarity, which is not to be found in France or America, the advantage is inestimable. It ensures this great result—that every opinion or pretension which becomes prominent is sure to get adequately criticised, and, however unpopular the just criticism may often be, it holds its ground, and sooner or later must prevail.

Closely connected with the foregoing is the existence of a newspaper press which, almost more than any other feature in the

social condition of England, distinguishes it from other countries. The characteristics of the English press upon which its influence depends are—first, the high moral tone and the consummate ability shown in a large portion of its discussions ; but, *secondly*, and *chiefly*, *the fulness and accuracy with which it records all the sayings and doings of public interest which happen not merely in England, but throughout the world.*

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Great evils, then, do appear to threaten  
The Great Want. England. But what should we  
do that such evils may not come  
upon us? The remedy is plain—no legislative nostrum—no ingenious device of the socialist projector, for enabling evil hearts to carry out the Divine law—no novel stimulant to make an empty life supportable ; no, something homely, old, and familiar, but often tried in individual cases, and always

found effectual—PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY. This is the subject, the marrow of the whole.

When one of the graver maladies afflicts the human organization, especially with symptoms unwonted, mysterious, suggesting despair, the cause is to be looked for far in, near the source of life itself. So it is now. If anything be wrong with England, you must look deep into her moral constitution to find out the cause. Her fierce commercial paroxysms are but the symptoms of a deep-lying disease, for which it is in vain to seek a cure in any external applications. In this lies Carlyle's greatest truth; a negative one, yet most prolific, uttered by him at least as long ago as 1829, namely, that no good will come from mere mechanical alterations. Social machinery will do nothing in such cases. An inward change is what is wanted, if that could only be brought about. For in this great English people it is the functions of the heart that are disturbed, and the brain, unconsciously yet closely sympathising therewith, wanders and cannot

find rest. In a word, our specific malady at this present time, notwithstanding our active but rather noisy philanthropy, must be described as an aversion of the national heart to practical Christianity.

More than eighteen hundred years ago a DIVINE LIFE was exhibited in a human form, and mingled for ever with the general life of humanity. Then was laid the only foundation for all human reforms and all human hopes. This is what I believe. I am not ashamed to wear what have been called those "Hebrew old clothes." I believe that they never will grow old. But the proof? The proof lies in the fact, patent to every eye, that this, and this only, *has* been the regenerating influence in the history of the world. Except this, the Greeks had everything: philosophy, poetry, history, eloquence, art—and all could not avert decay. If decay is now to be averted, this Christian faith alone can do it. It is this which *is* doing the saving work, so far as it is done, even now. While philan-

thropists are planning in their easy chairs—while philosophers are speculating, economists calculating, and statesmen making laws—those true ministers of Christ, who show his spirit in their lives, whether they be or be not marked out by formal ordination, are actually, in the abodes of poverty and ignorance and sorrow, carrying on that process of individual personal communication, without which nothing effectual is accomplished for the moral redemption of mankind.

And, in truth, this is not a critical, but a practical question. The proof, which, as Paley said, clenches the matter, must always be that practical one which touches not the head but the heart. Put the critics and commentators on the shelf, and study the Christian evidences in the lives of Oberlin, and Neff, and Howard, and Mrs Fry ; or, if picked specimens do not seem fair, go into the Sunday school, where neither fame nor philosophy comes in to confuse the result. In a word, find out and examine what



persons *they* are, who, *upon any large scale*, exhibit practical energy and self-denial in the cause of humanity.

Numbers would heartily concur in this practical conclusion, who will recoil and fly off to all points of the compass from the inference to which it invariably leads. That inference is, that this argument, decisive as it is in behalf of Christianity, is worthless in support of the exclusive pretensions of any one church. It will not make out the case of the Church of Rome against the Church of England, nor of the Church of England against the Church of Rome, nor serve in the least degree to sustain any one of the forms of Dissenting infallibility. It follows that Christianity must be looked at, not as some one sect *would* have it, but as the world actually *has* had it. The warfare against it has been moved off to new ground. The old bulwarks are built up in a quarter where the contest no longer rages. That work of defence which was carried on before by

The Practical  
Argument  
not for Sects.

isolated and mutually hostile champions, will no longer avail if it cannot be conducted on some principle of combination. The basis of any successful defence against the modern scepticism must be the *conception of Christianity in its historical integrity*. It did not dive under ground, as has been sometimes supposed, for ten centuries, nor abandon for that long period the great active life of Europe to take refuge in the caves and hiding-places of the Paulicians and Albigenses. It was there throughout, blended always with more or less of human error and weakness, but still alive and potent in Hildebrand himself as certainly as in Luther. One cannot survey the churches of Great Britain at the present day without seeing that those works which are the fruits and the proofs of faith do in fact proceed from *all* of them. This is no reason why any one church should yield what it believes to be truth, or accept what it believes to be error, but it is a reason why all the criminations and malignities of controversy should

be at once and for ever abandoned. Externally, and in their exclusive aspect, all the churches are repulsive. Internally and in their Christian aspect, all are beautiful. Let every man be held disqualified for sectarian controversy, until all that is angry and impure and selfish in his nature has been purged away. Let the desire for reform be everywhere turned within, and then that inner beauty of the churches would all come out, and the whole visible front of Christianity would become radiant like the ranks of the celestial host, by which in the great English epic the power of Evil is overthrown!

